

Floreen, Silverman propose county aid for roads backlog

Two County Council members want to double the money that the county is scheduled to spend on transportation projects over the next three years in hopes of jump-starting projects awaiting state funding.

On Tuesday, Steven A. Silverman (D-At large) of Silver Spring and Nan-

cy would come from, but no individual agencies or programs would be sacrificed, Floreen said.

Floreen and Silverman already have Duncan's support.

"The Eulich Administration has failed to provide the leadership needed to keep our region and State moving forward, taking one step forward and two steps backwards with its raid on the State's Transportation Trust Fund," Duncan, who is running for governor, said in a prepared statement. "... At the local level, we are stepping up to the plate to get some of these projects back on track by contributing our own funds to these state initiatives."

The council will consider the proposal as part of its fiscal 2007 budget discussions.

Council Notes

JANEL DAVIS

cy M. Floreen (D-At large) of Garrett Park proposed an \$82 million package to go toward the county's portion of state road projects.

The money would double the \$80 million already included in County Executive Douglas M. Duncan's proposed budget, for a total of \$160 million in county funds allocated for state projects.

Floreen and Silverman announced the proposal at a news conference Tuesday at Route 355 and Montrose Parkway in Rockville, a future interchange site that has long been on the county's priority list.

"State money has been put into projects slowly," Floreen said. "Our motto has become, 'Where there's a need, there's a way.'"

Under the proposal, \$1 million would go toward the county's budget for its "Free Wheeling Days" program, which offers free Ride On bus service on certain days in congested areas. Another \$1 million would go toward the county's Super Fare Share Program, a partnership that matches private employers' contributions to employee public transit funds.

About \$22 million in liquor profits would be used to pay for a portion of the revenue bonds needed to pay for the package, said Silverman, who is running for county executive.

Amounts contributed by the state then could be used to repay the borrowed money. The funding would not count toward the county's debt limits, which are close to the limit for the next two fiscal years, said Timothy L. Firestone, the county's finance director. Approval from taxpayers would not be needed to use the revenue bonds.

The council members have not identified where the remaining mon-

In other council action

•Crown Farm annex approved: The council voted 7-2 for the City of Gaithersburg's annexation petition for Crown Farm. The revised plan requires developers to contribute \$2 million to the county's agricultural preservation fund. Council members Philip M. Andrews (D-Dist. 3) of Gaithersburg and Marilyn J. Praisner (D-Dist. 4) of Calverton cast the dissenting votes.

•Agriculture committee: The council appointed 15 people to an ad hoc committee designed to provide advice on planning and development in the 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve. On its list: rural density transfer zones, child lots (which allow farmers to build homes for their children) and the Transfer of Development Rights program. The committee's report is due by year's end.

•Bargaining delay: The council delayed action on a contract extension for the county employees union until funding requests are reviewed. Currently, the agreement would require \$356,000 for improvements such as crossing guard safety vests, nursing incentives and a keyless entry system in Health and Human Services buildings. A final decision is scheduled for May 15. The union contract, covering about 5,000 county and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission employees is the only one before the council this year.

ACCELERATING PROJECTS

- Interchange at Route 355/Rockville Pike and Montrose Parkway/Randolph Road
- New garage at Glenmont Metro Station
- Interchange at Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue in Glenmont
- Southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro station
- Interchange at I-270 and Watkins Mill Road in Gaithersburg
- Widening of Maryland 124 from Midcounty Highway to Airport Road in Gaithersburg
- Brookeville Bypass, north of Olney
- Interchange at Maryland 28 and Georgia Avenue
- Widening of Maryland 117 west of I-270 in Gaithersburg